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September 30, 2009

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources has been awarded a \$6,869,982 federal grant from the Minerals Management Service. The grant, funded through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP), will be used for the construction of 14,664 linear feet of artificial reefs to close four breaches along the Terrebonne Basin in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). *Melancon Voted for 2005 Energy Bill that Funds this Grant*  
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**"Improving the safety and protection of south Louisiana's people and wetlands has been one of my top priorities in Congress," said Rep. Melancon. "By restoring the reefs that buffer our coast from storms, these projects will provide greater hurricane protection for communities in south Louisiana while also preserving our coastal wetlands."**

During Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Louisianans lost more than 200 square miles of coastline. The restoration of these reefs in critical areas is included as part of the Louisiana Coastal Impact Assistance Program Plan.

**"This CIAP grant will protect the thin-mat floating marsh south of the GIWW and will allow for much better fresh water distribution into a greater portion of the Terrebonne Basin," said Reggie Dupre, executive director of the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District.**

Rep. Melancon supported the creation of the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) as part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. CIAP authorizes \$250 million in grants annually, from 2007-2010, to be distributed to six outer continental shelf oil and gas producing states: Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, California, Mississippi and Texas. These grants are for coastal restoration and mitigation of the impacts of OCS oil and gas activities. Of the \$500 million in federal funding allocated during the last two years (FY2007 and 2008), Louisiana has received more than \$255 million for coastal restoration projects.

**Rep. Melancon continued: "I cannot emphasize enough how important the Coastal Impact Assistance Program is to Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. As the region continues to recover from the devastating hurricanes of 2005 and 2008, the projects supported by this program will strengthen hurricane protection for hundreds of thousands of Louisianians."**

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